

5.12 Population and Housing

This section examines whether Project implementation will result in significant population and housing impacts. This analysis focuses on population and housing impacts associated with the adoption and implementation of the proposed General Plan and adoption and implementation of the Magnolia Avenue Specific Plan, as these actions have the potential to either induce population growth (directly or indirectly) or displace substantial numbers of persons. The Zoning Code and Subdivision Code essentially serve as implementing instruments of the General Plan; they will not directly or indirectly induce population growth or displace persons. The Citywide Design Guidelines and Sign Guidelines only address site planning, building design and community aesthetics and are thus not considered relevant to this analysis.

Environmental Setting

The City of Riverside ranks as the eleventh most populous city in California, with a 2003 population of approximately 275,000 residents, according to the California Department of Finance (see **Chart 5-1**). Following World War II, the City experienced significant development, resulting in an eight percent annual increase in population. Increasing suburbanization resulted in a 6.6 percent annual growth rate during the 1960s. Population growth continued at a more modest rate during the 1970s and 1980s, increasing at 2.2 and 3.3 percent annually. The City's population growth rate slowed during the 1990s to 1.3 percent as the region recovered from military base realignments and other economic changes. With the economic recovery in the late 1990s, the City's population increased to approximately 275,000 as of 2003.

The City of Riverside's housing market followed the economic conditions in the City during the 1990s (see **Chart 5-2**). Following the economic boom and housing construction boom of the mid- to late-1980s, housing production sharply dropped in 1990 and 1991, falling nearly 50 percent from the peak of 2,232 units in 1989. Additional declines were to follow concurrent with defense cutbacks, base realignments and excess housing production stimulated from federal tax legislation. Housing production was flat from 1992 through 1997.

Housing demand was pent up during the mid-1990s due to the downturn in the economy. However, improvements in the regional and local economy during the late 1990s led to a significant level increase housing demand. Single-family and multi-family housing construction averaged 700 units and 600 units, respectively, during a 2-year period of 1998 and 1999. Beginning in 2000, however, housing construction significantly increased. From 2000 to 2003, more than 4,000 residential units were permitted for construction.

The construction boom of the early 2000s is projected to continue through 2005. A significant number of single- and multi-family residential building permits are being approved or are in the planning stages. In addition, the proposed General Plan re-designates formerly underutilized commercial land for higher density mixed uses, including residential uses.

Chart 5-1
Riverside Population Growth, 1950-2000

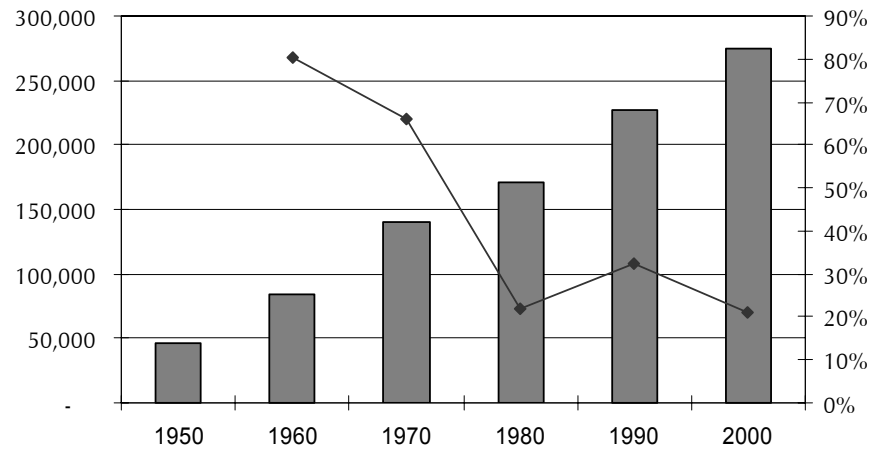
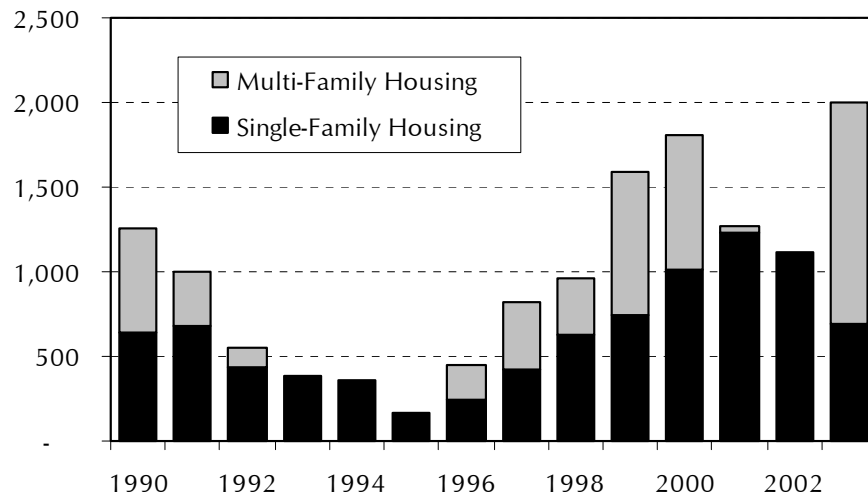


Chart 5-2
Residential Building Permit Issuance,
City of Riverside, 1990-2003



Source: CA Department of Finance, 2004.

Given continued high demand for housing due to employment and population growth, the City expects additional housing production in upcoming years.

The SCAG 2004 RTP population, household and employment forecasts for the Western Riverside Council of Governments (WRCOG) subregion and the City of Riverside are as follows:

**Table 5.12-1
Long-Range Regional Growth Projections**

	Year 2025		
	Population	Employment	Housing
City of Riverside	353,397	217,369	121,149
WRCOG subregion	2,230,185	776,168	822,031

Source: SCAG, 2004.

The population projected within Riverside's existing (2003) City limits is anticipated to constitute 16 percent of the population within the WRCOG subregion of Riverside County, while the City is projected to accommodate 28 percent of the subregion's employment and 15 percent of the anticipated housing growth.

Thresholds for Determining Level of Impact

For the purposes of this EIR, a significant impact will occur if implementation of the Project will:

- Induces substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure);
- Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere; or
- Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

Environmental Impacts

Development pursuant to Project policies and regulatory standards will result in the addition of new dwelling units and new non-residential construction over the 20-year horizon of the General Plan within the Planning Area.

Population Growth

The SCAG 2004 RTP long-range regional growth projections consider growth within Riverside's existing City limits through year 2025; estimates specific to the Sphere of Influence have not been made.

As noted in Table 5.12-1, SCAG anticipates that the City of Riverside will have 121,149 dwelling units and 353,397 residents by 2025. In comparison, City estimates provide for 115,182 dwelling units and 336,896 residents within the current City limits by 2025, slightly less than that projected by SCAG. Given the long-range nature of these forecasts, the Project is considered consistent with SCAG's long-range forecasts.

Within the proximate Sphere of Influence, the Project will provide for approximately 13,455 dwelling units and 39,359 residents. As land use policy is generally consistent with the Riverside County RCIP for this area, these projections are accounted for in SCAG's estimates for unincorporated County areas.

The following General Plan Land Use and Urban Design Element objective and policies, which emphasize infill development and revitalization of underutilized parcels within the City, will work with the Land Use Policy Map and its implementation to forward growth policy:

Objective LU-8: Emphasize smart growth principles through all steps of the land development process.

Policy LU-8.1: Ensure well-planned infill development Citywide, allow for increased density in selected areas along established transportation corridors.

Policy LU-8.3: Allow for mixed-use development at varying intensities at selected areas as a means of revitalizing underutilized urban parcels.

Because the Project's buildout capacity is generally consistent with SCAG's long-range growth forecasts, the Project's population growth inducement impact will be less than significant.

Displacement

The General Plan Land Use and Urban Design Element maintains current land use patterns and policy within outlying areas of the City and includes the following objectives and policies to encourage infill and revitalization of vacant and underutilized areas the established core and along major travel corridors:

Objective LU-8: Emphasize smart growth principles through all steps of the land development process.

Policy LU-8.1: Ensure well-planned infill development Citywide, allow for increased density in selected areas along established transportation corridors.

Policy LU-8.3: Allow for mixed-use development at varying intensities at selected areas as a means of revitalizing underutilized urban parcels.

Objective LU-24: Add to the City's industrial land base where logically and physically possible to do so.

Policy LU-24.4: Identify opportunities to redevelop older underutilized properties.

As indicated by the above objectives and policies, the General Plan encourages infill and revitalization of both vacant and underutilized sites. Infill development on vacant sites would not displace residents and/or businesses; however, revitalization of underutilized sites could displace residents and businesses over time. Nevertheless, the displacement impact will not be significant because it will provide for new housing at these locations, together with complementary commercial uses. In other portions of the Planning Area, the General Plan proposes a mix of residential and non-residential uses on sites currently underutilized with exclusively non-residential uses. As noted by Policy LU-8.4 above, the Project encourages a mix of both residential and non-residential uses as a means of revitalizing many underutilized parcels through the implementation of three new Mixed-Use land use designations to implement this policy. At a programmatic level, the Project's displacement impact will be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required, as Project impact will be less than significant.

Level of Significance after Mitigation

With adherence to the above General Plan policies, Project population and housing impact will be less than significant at the programmatic level.